

Shortwave

volume one



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Letter from the Editors

Hello, dear reader,

We (the discerning, communicative, and wise editors of this zine) are Maggie and David.

The zine in your hands may seem like a booklet of folded computer paper, which, of course, it is, but it is more importantly a testament to our dedication to ephemera. For you, the reader, this zine may last 30 seconds or it may last a lifetime, but no matter what it will remain a snapshot of our lives at this moment in time. And it took a whole lot of work to bring the zine from a nascent idea to a finished product. In the hours of writing and rewriting, editing and re-editing, formatting and re-formatting, long nights spent on Adobe InDesign, and many texts and emails, we and our incredible writers, artists, and photographers have created Shortwave #1.

But, why a zine?

The idea of a zine has been floating around in the WXBC circles for a while now. WXBC actually used to have a zine (called Placenta, ew) but the origins of this zine lie in two places: a weekly Substack that David championed last semester. David tried really hard, but the Substack wasn't actually that fun, probably because it came in an email and because WXBC had to use yet another corporate entity for its communication needs. A new form of media was needed.

We knew that we needed to make something that took a physical form. A paper zine is something that we can actually wrap our heads and our hands around, that feels real. This real product will hopefully feel more memorable, tangible, and concrete than a Substack. We hope the people who contributed can look at this physical object and be proud.

We also, more importantly, chose a zine for its slowness. A

zine is slow. Slow to start and even slower to finish. We wanted people to have all the time in the world to make something for it, and we want people now to have all the time they need to take in its contents.

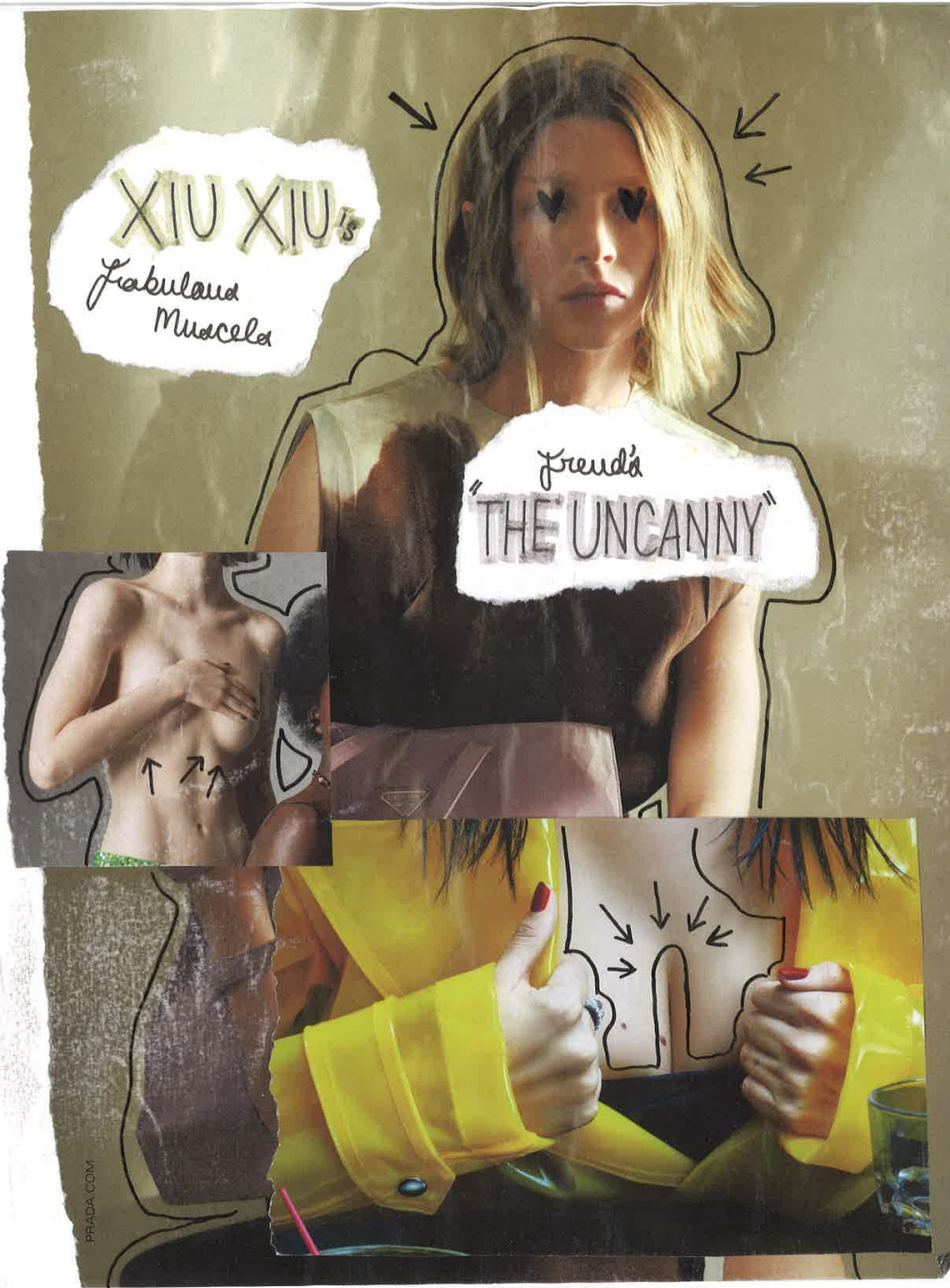
An idea written on the internet will inevitably fade into the digital ether. This zine exists as a physical testament to what people were thinking about in Fall 2023. It will always be part of our physical reality. And you, dear reader, can permanently impact/be permanently impacted by this zine in whatever way you'd like. You can love it, hate it, scorn it, frame it, burn it, kiss it, cherish it forever.

This zine is important because we're claiming a power that we all have—the power to make something cool. We (genius editors) and all the wonderful people who contributed to this zine have decided to not wait until after college to publish and be published. We all made something we think is cool and interesting, and now it's in your hands. Do with it what you will.

Thanks,
Maggie and David



MODEL 671



Xiu Xiu and the Uncanny

By Maeby Ingram

*Break my face in
It was the kindest touch you
Ever gave
Wrap my dreams around your thighs
And drape my hope upon the chance to touch your arm
Fabulous muscles
“Fabulous Muscles,” Xiu Xiu*

Xiu Xiu’s 2004 album *Fabulous Muscles* is tense. Each track is infused with a strained tenderness that the listener has no choice but to lean into. The lyrics are veiled by overproduced vocals which highlight certain words and phrases and obscure others. Each song feels like an uncomfortable embrace; familiar yet strange, known but discomfiting.

What makes this album so unnerving? The truth is, most of its tracks simply aren’t—with a punk-pop feel, tracks like “I Luv The Valley OH!” and “Clowne Towne” don’t produce the same eeriness

as more somber and alarming tracks like “Nieces Pieces” and “Mike.” “Little Panda McElroy” feels almost dreamy, like a lullaby—but something’s not quite right.

To understand this sense of uncanniness, we might focus on the vocals. In a Pitchfork interview, Jamie Stewart, the band’s lead vocalist and songwriter, says that their lyrics are “never fictional.” Covering topics from family violence, to abuse in relationships, to hating the army, the lyrics create a sense of distress in the listener, especially considering the chilling topics covered in under 38 minutes of run time; the lyrics

to “Brian the Vampire” alone are enough to make one deeply uncomfortable and distressed. However, these lyrics do not stand alone—they are coupled with instrumentals that range from harsh and distressing percussive and synth elements, to soothing and comforting acoustics. This mix of the familiar and comforting with the fraught and uneasy creates a hazardous sense of intimacy in the album—but how is this “uncanny”?

Freud argues that the uncanny is not frightening because it is unfamiliar to us, but precisely because it is familiar, unconsciously. Freud writes, in his essay “The Uncanny,” that the “uncanny is in reality nothing new or foreign, but something familiar and old—established in the mind.” The uncanny thus takes something familiar to us, such as a beloved doll, and twists it into something frightening and evil. This conception of the uncanny illuminates the sense of uncanniness produced in *Fabulous Muscles*. Stewart plays with traditionally comforting and intimate sounds— onomatopoeia,

soft singsong, childlike chanting—as juxtaposed with the desperate and frantic; they take the familiar and twist it into something that is as extremely emotional as it is haunting.

Xiu Xiu’s skill in balancing the familiar with the eerie is attractive to both the cult follower and the moderate listener alike. And, almost two decades out, the album continues in its relevance. In my two years listening to the band, I’ve seen their most-liked song on Spotify—“I Luv The Valley OH!”—triple in listens. The uncanniness of every track in the album has certainly contributed to its success, and, I believe, will only continue to. •

Homer Coll

By Reidar Blanco

You are dependent, but we forbade them
Aid and compromised resentment, then
Our little Babylon pierced heaven’s hide
Its ramparts upon me, but I never died
Under guises I could not reach your lair
Mummified in the same knotted hair
That defied us, lapse in lack of vision!
Forgive me, perhaps, if the rats let go
Attrition slacks past malnutrition

I am dependent, but we agreed
Never to concede this resplendence, to
Heed every genus of statistic
Till deaf and dumb I stay a genius
Yet, brother, whence will come my health
For sitting here so fatalistic?
You barely owe remorse for this hell, for
Into the walls we’re dissipating
Library of a corpse in doubt and waiting
Is what twelve days alone carves out

Elsewhere, though

Your brother awaits where he was forbidden
That maw that hates no soul no more
Ithaca’s grandfather is fast bedridden
Last you saw, rather smitten halfway to the core
Pitch-black paradise, untamed stone
Where warred countless charlatans for his throne
It’s his dead repose, a smiling elder, but after all
(is said, done, then closed)
Gold teeth become the wall

Were you harder-hearted when Earth interred him
Would he thank you the way rock deterred him?
Deferred to solid cosmos deeper than your grief
It’s a bastard of relief that bears your spade
Whose indulgence pity alone hath not paid
One’s hand stayed by rotten fruits and a love
Like the phantom limb he begged to thrash
Their dreams dashed of him by impatient men, but
Tomorrow, brother in the blind,
My beams shall grace you yet again



Nathan Miller

Sunday

By Leyna Fraley

sunday
 i dread sunday
 they feel damp
 groggy
 sundays to me feel
 like someone dragged your legs out of your bed
 making you fold clothes that were already ironed and
 pressed
 hand washing garments that were nylon and invincible
 soaked in starch and heavy smelling detergent
 sundays feel like trying to color in the lines when
 you were little and couldn't even hold a pen in the right hand
 let alone correctly
 all day
 sunday
 the looming thought
 of waking up early to start another never ending week
 that ended with a sunday
 was hanging over my head
 with no way out but to
 color in the lines
 hang your favorite pair of pants on a clothes line
 that happen to be tumble dry only
 crawl out of bed without your permission
 and to sit in a cloud that was not yet ready to poor
 but had started to get humid



Nathan Miller

I Finally Found the Game!

By Casey Robertson

I get a lot of targeted advertisements for puzzle games. They appear to be made on an extremely low-budget using royalty-free assets, thematically rotating between zombie survival, twee military, and medieval dungeon crawls with gold to collect and princesses to save. Most of the advertisements fall within this last category for some reason. No matter the game or theme, the formula for the advertisement is consistent: an off-screen “player” does a remarkable job at failing every level they come across while the ad questions if your intelligence could handle their pinnacle of handheld gaming. The example levels are decidedly simple; the solution is almost always immediately apparent. As this ad shows me failure after failure, my frustration proliferates until I become agitated enough to want to download the app so I can finally prove to this non-person “playing” the game that I’m better than them, but in the last moment I hesitate.

I catch my breath, drink

some water, and let my heart rate return to normal. I know well enough that if I download the game I will only become subsumed into a world aimed at pricking my addictive impulses with their “one more hit” insistence on playing the next level, facilitated in a salt-on-the-wound fashion with mandatory micro-transactions in order to advance. Alternatively, to save money I can wait three hours for the next round, but the temptation would be too great. I swipe left and move on.

The next ad is about hiking shoes, brilliantly timed to be on my feed after I’ve already purchased a pair. Perhaps the company is hopeful that I am dissatisfied with my new kicks or that I am compulsive enough to expand my collection of outdoor-wear. Of course, shoes are only the beginning of one’s outdoor-wear journey: one also needs jackets, waterproof pants, wool socks that are allegedly “smart,” and so on. For the record I don’t hike, I simply needed one pair of waterproof shoes for the winter, and now each day I am persuaded to be the hiking man I’ve apparently always wanted to be. Following this is an ad for some deck of cards that gamifies the experience of doing chores. It has a patronizing name like “heroes quest,” and I am reminded that I am a member of the age group that

has the audacity to pat itself on the back everytime we do a basic task while simultaneously infantilizing ourselves by calling the process “adulting.” My pulse is racing and I’m starting to taste metal, so I put my telephone down and go to bed.

Targeted advertisements often leave me with a feeling of nausea, the root of which has evolved over time. I was once in the camp of folks who were worried about the “surveillance” aspect of this targeting. Like most of us, I have uttered that conspiratorial “my device listening to me” sentiment any time I’m met with an ad that eerily reflects a recent real-life experience or conversation. Unfortunately the truth is far more boring than a big brother boogiemani, because in reality I’ve simply been giving my information out to data companies for more than half of my life ever since I created my first Myspace profile in 2007. Most of the time when you get an advertisement about something “you were just talking about,” it is because you and whoever you were talking to have your location constantly being transmitted to apps that sell your data, and now these data collectors know that you two hang out together and are likely discussing things that you’ve looked up, purchased, etc. We speak of our phones as if they are secret police discretely extracting information from us, when in fact we confess everything about ourselves to our

device as if they are our drunk companion at sunrise.

I am left feeling nauseous when I see a targeted advertisement because each experience is a glimpse at the uncanny image of my consumer-self; a digital homunculus ceaselessly growing from all the quantifiable data I’ve fed it for more than a decade. Each second I remain connected to my device, he grows stronger and more determined to indoctrinate me into his perverted world of commodity fetishism. It’s a world I participate in and ceaselessly contribute towards. I ask the advertisement “what are you?” and they respond: “I am become Chaz, consumer of hot sauce subscriptions.” I swipe left to evade my doppelganger, only to encounter him once more in a new form, stronger than before. I feel sick.

The philosopher Byung-Chul Han has warned us countless times that we inhabit a world of growing narcissism. Our data-driven world of bespoke algorithmic transmissions only brings us endless encounters with the Same, digital reifications of the self that inflate the ego while disappearing the other. Difference – that incredible quality that allows us to realize a world outside of ourselves – is slowly fading into obscurity. The price we pay is devastating and boring.

A few months go by and I’m visited by an old friend: the medieval puzzle game ad-



Gabriel Chermak

vertisement. This time however, something is different – the image of the game is obscured by a figure. Her dead eyed stare meets my gaze and she begins to speak: “You know that game you always thought was fake? Well today I finally found the game!” I pause. She knows me. She knows I never clicked the previous ad and that I never searched for the game in the app store. She proceeds to fail miserably at the puzzles, carrying on the legacy of her non-person predecessors. “To be honest, I have to use my brain to play this” she complains as she loses puzzle after puzzle, embodying the game’s digital damsel in distress in hopes that I will come to

her rescue. The advertisement has shifted its strategy: They’ve clocked me as uncompetitive and disinterested in besting the non-person and are now seeking downloads via sexual desire and an attitude of chivalry that parallels the hero protagonist of the medieval dungeon crawl.

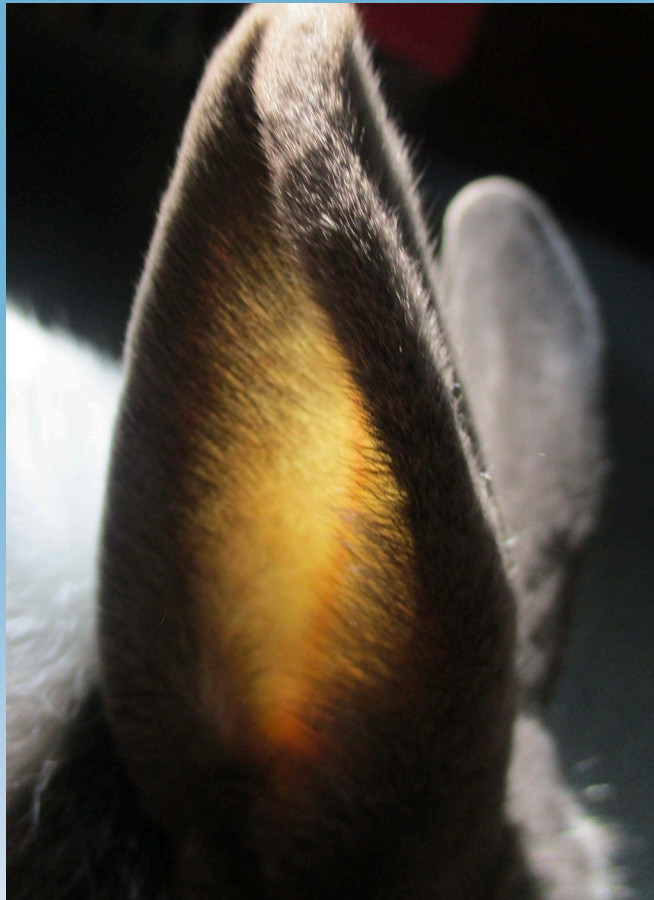
Unfortunately for her, I remain unconvinced. I turn off my phone (or rather, I put it to rest). My doppelganger is still there, floating in the infinite space behind the liquid crystals. He stares at me through the cracked glass decorated with a patina of oils and cat hair. He blinks – did I blink? I should go to bed. I close my eyes and dream about work. ●

Dawn

I'm so young to be
awake so early, The sun,
Gentle, he is mute.

In the morning fog,
When I am thinking of you,
the heavy Blue dawn feels enough.

Julia Seaver



Nathan Miller

You Called Me an Asshole:

Sound Art and the No Wave in
Barbara Ess' *Just Another Asshole*

An excerpt from the senior project by Ray Camp

"Welcome to the unwave. I haven't heard so much ferociously avant-garde and aggressively ugly music since Albert Ayler puked all over my brain back in - what? - 64. And like Ayler, who started at the end of his development and then started working his way backward (and eventually jumped into the Hudson River for a permanent swim), this music has no future. But it does have a vindictive present. It's a nihilistic burnt-out last blast of mangled energy that scours the spirit. Its cleansing power that is unreal - spend a few hours with this record and then everything sounds different."

– Richard C Walls, review of No New York, Creem Magazine, 1979

In early May of 1978, Artist's Space in Tribeca hosted a five day event which served as the impetus for the world's introduction to No Wave. Ten bands – Terminal, the Communists, the Gynecologists, Tone Death, Theoretical Girls, DNA, James Chance & The Contortions, Teenage Jesus & The Jerks, Mars, and Daily Life (a band which featured Christine Hahn, Glenn Branca, and Barbara Ess) – played sets, mostly to each other, their friends, and their community of artists, musicians, writers, and everything in between. Also in the audience that night was a star figure in alternative music cir-

cles, a larger-than-life hero to many of the bands who were playing: Brian Eno, former member of the glam rock band Roxy music, collaborator of David Bowie, and producer of punk acts such as DEVO and the Talking Heads. Upon seeing the Artist's Space performances, Eno, in collaboration with Island Records, commissioned a compilation album which would document the new sound, and fledgling scene, which he had witnessed.

This album, entitled No New York, was initially meant to feature all ten bands which had performed at the Artist's Space festival, as a true document of the vocabu-

lary and persuasions of these bands, many of whom sounded quite different from each other despite their

BANDS
AT ARTISTS SPACE
8 PM

TUES MAY 2	COMMUNISTS TERMINAL
WED MAY 3	GYNECOLOGISTS THEORETICAL GIRLS
THURS MAY 4	DAILY LIFE TONE DEATH
FRI MAY 5	CONTORTIONS DNA
SAT MAY 6	MARS TEENAGE JESUS AND THE JERKS

LIMITED SEATING \$3.
ARTISTS SPACE 105 HUDSON ST
AT FRANKLIN
226-3970

proximity. Ultimately, this would not be the case, despite the rumored universal nature of this record. Between rocky interpersonal relationships (when Eno asked Arto Lindsay of DNA whether the other bands involved in the show were interested in participating, Lindsay's response was, "There are no other bands" in what has been called an effort to keep Glenn Branca off the album), as well as typically flippant downtown hijinx (upon learning of Eno's intentions, Branca and his other band, Theoretical Girls, announced that they were going to perform a song about Eno at their next show, and though they did not actually do so, they learned a few days later that they were not to be included on Eno's record), the num-

ber of bands was reduced to just four – Mars, Teenage Jesus & The Jerks, James Chance & The Contortions, and DNA. record. Between rocky interpersonal relationships (when Eno asked Arto Lindsay of DNA whether the other bands involved in the show were interested in participating, Lindsay's response was, "There are no other bands" in what has been called an effort to keep Glenn Branca off the album), as well as typically flippant downtown hijinx (upon learning of Eno's intentions, Branca and his other band, Theoretical Girls, announced that they were going to perform a song about Eno at their next show, and though they did not actually do so, they learned a few days later that they were not to be included on Eno's record), the number of bands was reduced to just four – Mars, Teenage Jesus & The Jerks, James Chance & The Contortions, and DNA.

The resulting album ran just under 45 minutes, featuring four songs from each of the featured bands. Although it was musically strong, the album was criticized both by the artists themselves, and in reviews, for making the different groups sound too similar. Indeed, Eno's production makes each band - all of whom were known for their uniquely disparate styles - sound the same (for proof of the varied sounds of No Wave, one might listen to James Chance's later jazz-inflected recording of the classic "These Foolish Things," as compared to the spoken word piece "An Excerpt From Universal Infiltration" by Teenage Jesus' Lydia Lunch). Even within

the studio, tensions were apparent, as Eno tried to use his big-budget, commercial recording and producing techniques on music which was meant to be just the opposite of that. And Eno's homogenizing production and mainstream interests were not the only complaint about the record; certain bands who had been left off the record felt slighted by the exclusion, for the record could not be a true document of this moment or movement without their presence. Beyond this, the album, especially in its critical reception, has been said to be a sort of headstone for no wave; in the words of No Wave historian Marc Masters, "within a year, many No Wave groups were gone. As The New York Times' Robert Palmer put it, 'Naming the movement just about finished it off.' By any measure, No Wave was a blip - a blinding flash of art that barely lasted long enough to qualify as a movement."

Indeed, it was true that "the movement" that Eno had witnessed did not last long. Notably, one of the groups left off the album was Daily Life, Barbara Ess' band with Chris-

tine Hahn and Glenn Branca (both of whom would later become collaborators on Just Another Asshole). In reference to the album, Hahn noted that "Daily Life broke up right after the Artists Space showcase. We got a horrible review in the SoHo News and then felt snubbed due to not being included on the No New York recording. It was devastating for us." The record, in creating a document which did anything but represent the community it claimed to come from, had divided and killed off some of the underground vitality which No Wave represented; and yet it was this very kind of rejection which motivated this music in the first place.

It might be argued that Branca and Ess' exclusion from the record, and their deep connection to the underground scene of No Wave and beyond, deeply influenced their collaborative fifth issue of Just Another Asshole. Issued in 1981, the fifth issue of the magazine was a 12" vinyl record featuring 77 tracks by 84 artists, ranging from spoken word poetry to sound art to what one might call music, produced in an issue of 1000 with support and funding from the gallery and performance space White Columns. Notably, the LP was released in the same year that White Columns held their now iconic Noise Fest, a nine day festival organized by musician and writer Thurston Moore which sought to bring together the established artists from the days of No New York, and the "new wave" of No Wave artists, which Moore described as:



a reaction to false claims

made by the majority of rock/disco club owners and the overground music press. The commercial, 'successful' sound of the 'Big Beat' British band has seduced club owners and has diminished the range of music presented in the video/lounge circuit. The fact is that there are more young, new, experimental rock musicians than ever before. The number of bands and their necessary progress is essential to Noise Fest and its main projection: to unite.

The festival came alongside an exhibition at White Columns, organized and curated by Kim Gordon and Barbara Ess, of visual art by the musicians who performed in the festival. The festival sought to decompartmentalize the genre of No Wave, and to highlight and bring together the relationships between both the visual and the auditory, and between the different generations of artists still actively experimenting and creating in 1981. Just Another Asshole #5 works towards a similar goal of bringing together the disparate sonic sides of the No Wave community and uniting them on one album, which can be seen in its refusal and lack of sonic, aesthetic, or stylistic cohesion on the record. There are, however, three distinct categories or genres which, despite a remarkable degree of intermixing, make themselves apparent: music, sonic appropriation, and spoken word.

As one might expect from a 12" record – especially given Barbara Ess and Glenn Branca's proximity to the No Wave music scene – the majority of the tracks on Just Another Asshole #5 are musical in nature. Certain tracks, such as Rudolph Grey's submission entitled "Evelyn McHale" and Lee Ranaldo's biting "Shift" – both of which utilize guitars, feedback, and distortion to create tracks which aim not for melodic structure but rather pure noise and tone – seem to nod to the aesthetic impulses of the bands featured on No New York. Unlike Eno's album, however, Ess and Branca did not limit the album to only those artists interested in reducing music to noise; instead, the album's musical acts were quite varied. Some tunes are somewhat simple: Carol Parkinson's submission, for example, consists of a beautiful piano solo, while Harry Spitz's submission, aptly entitled "Pipe Song," was made by banging on metal pipes to create a melody, and John Rehberger's "Fetish" was made by repeating a recording of a power tool to create a rhythm. Others are more stylistically complex: Andy Blinx and Don Hunerberg together created the unusual, 47 second long dance track entitled "Red Ants" utilizing a fast paced beat, a sitar, and a keyboard, while Bruce Tovsky, a prominent sound artist and composer, used a tape machine to create a riff on dub reggae, and Glenn Branca himself used undistinguishable vocals, sped up and delayed, to create a song. The featured songs, none of which are over a minute (except for Branca's, which lasts for one minute and

one second), utilize an astonishing range of techniques – some of which are traditional, most of which are not – and display a vast degree of musical styles, which cannot be described succinctly or pigeonholed. Given the uniform sound of No New York, which had unfairly come to characterize the style of the downtown avant garde community, it may be argued that Just Another Asshole #5 offers a more accurate, more community-centered representation of the downtown sound, and is a more truthful document than Eno's album had been or was. Part of this success came from the fact that Ess and Branca did not limit this documentation of the community to the strictly musical artists around them; many of the artists of downtown New York experimented across disciplines as opposed to only utilizing one medium – an exploration which oftentimes included sonic elements. Just Another Asshole #5 sought to explore an expanded definition of "music" or "sound," and thus included these investigations, in an effort to demonstrate the true range and interdisciplinary nature of the community.

As had become typical of Just Another Asshole, many of the tracks on the album used appropriation of the medium in question – in this case, recorded sound – to subvert, critique, and make fun of the original forms and the systems which they are a symptom of. This appropriative style is evident, in various ways, in the majority of the tracks on the album, in some cases in order to make music, and in

others as the submission itself. This is apparent from the second track, "Kojak / Wang," on which Dara Birnbaum uses the sound of "two shots at point blank range" to create a dance beat which wouldn't be entirely out of place at downtown nightclubs like the Mudd Club or Club 57. She was not alone in her use of recordings which evoked militaristic violence; Herr Lugus' submission "Happy Police Horn" uses a recorded police siren as an instrument for a 44 second track which is more than vaguely musical. Barbara Kruger's submission, "United Technology," simply features a 52 second recording of a propagandistic history of the helicopter, with no al-



Nicholas Siao-Classen

teration except for the addition of a muted recording of the whirring of a helicopter's blades. Each of these artists use appropriation within their typical styles – for Birnbaum, appropriation and alteration as a means to critique popular culture and media narratives, for Kruger, the use of language to expose the underlying systemic power structures, and for Lugus as a musician – in order to continue the investigation of the relationship between medium, sensationalism, violence, and entertainment which Just Another Asshole had thus far explored.

Other artists used appropriation as a means to investigate recorded music, specifically. The finest example of this is perhaps the submission from Dan Graham, an artist known for his love of underground music. While Dara Birnbaum only implicitly nodded to the downtown club scene, Graham made explicit reference to it; on his untitled track, he wove together samples of “Love Comes In Spurts” by first wave New York punks Richard Hell & The Voidoids, “Surfin’ Bird” as played by psychobilly New York transplants The Cramps, and the foundational “No Fun” by The Stooges, along with various animalistic vocals and an unidentifiable performance by another, female-fronted band of the punk persuasion. The three artists sampled – Richard Hell, The Cramps, and Iggy Pop & The Stooges – were, by 1981, quite well known both within and beyond New York’s punk circuit. Graham’s use of the songs, overwritten with animalistic sounds and other recordings, could be interpreted, in the context of JAA

#5, as a critique of the commercial interests of other downtown artists in comparison with other, more faithfully underground artists.

Joseph Nechvatal, a prominent sound artist in the community, took a similar approach for his submission; he combined various sampled audio recordings to create something altogether new, in a style which might be compared to Graham’s piece. Entitled “Crown of Thorns,” the track brings together quotations from sources such as the 1957 film *The Three Faces of Eve*, a monologue by comedian Bob Hope from 1948, and a February, 1981 sketch entitled “Drugs R Us: Delivery Girl” from the sketch comedy television show *Fridays*, all of which are combined with an ecstatic solo saxophone recording. There is little alteration to the audio clips other than their new relation to one another, but in their new order, they tell a narrative of violence, depression, and self-medication in relation to popular media and comedy. The track recalls a relationship between entertainment and violence which Ess had explored in previous issues of the magazine, while simultaneously beginning to explore new mediums – those of comedy and television, which relied heavily on the auditory as well as the visual or textual – which had yet to be covered in *Just Another Asshole*.

Kiki Smith used auditory appropriation quite differently from Nechvatal and Graham, though her track also dealt with topics left uncovered previously. Her untitled track features the first 44 seconds of the Pakistani song *Aaja Hum*



Nathan Miller

Kyun Rahen by Runa Laila, featured on the soundtrack of the film *Tehzeeb* in 1971, which is overwritten by Smith’s voice speaking of the changing of the seasons, the migration of butterflies and rabbits, and love. The film from which the song is taken deals with the dangerous

effect of Western culture on Eastern traditions, following a young woman who is forced to adopt Western traditions and is assaulted as a result. Smith’s track speaks to this narrative of Western violence through mediation; her words, spoken over the song, might be inter-

preted as a translation – however, the relation of the English words and the Urdu words is dubious, as an English-speaking listener likely does not have the means to affirm the translation. The song could be interpreted as a subtle critique of Western consumption of the popular yet fetishistic genre of “world music,” the ineffective nature of translation in media, and the limited capacity which language holds.

Although the idea of Western imperial violence is not raised again, the question of language and the medium of the word itself is commonplace on *Just Another Asshole #5*. Perhaps the best example of this is Jenny Holzer’s track, which features a male voice reading phrases, all of which begin with the letter “A,” from her hugely adaptable and variable series of works entitled *Truisms*, which she began in 1977. The works began as phrases, such as “A MAN CAN’T KNOW WHAT IT’S LIKE TO BE A MOTHER,” “A LOT OF OFFICIALS ARE CRACKPOTS,” and “A SINCERE EFFORT IS ALL YOU CAN ASK,” which were originally hand typed and posted around downtown New York, utilizing language as a means of making a visual artistic intervention. The project, which Holzer has continued throughout her career, was adapted repeatedly in different mediums, including billboard displays, public signage, and postcards – but other than her track for *Just Another Asshole #5*, the *Truisms* always remained visual. The use of the spoken word and the removal of the visual allows the audience less room to interpret the words for

themselves, as the tone and voice of the speaker inscribes its own meaning. The ambivalence of the phrases remains in the range of ideas being presented, but the stress of the voice – the almost facetious pronunciation of “mother,” the emphasis on the word “genius” in the phrase “A SENSE OF TIMING IS THE MARK OF GENIUS,” and intonation which one might expect to hear from a commercial voice-over – reveals some underlying, insidious meaning that is unique to the recorded spoken word.

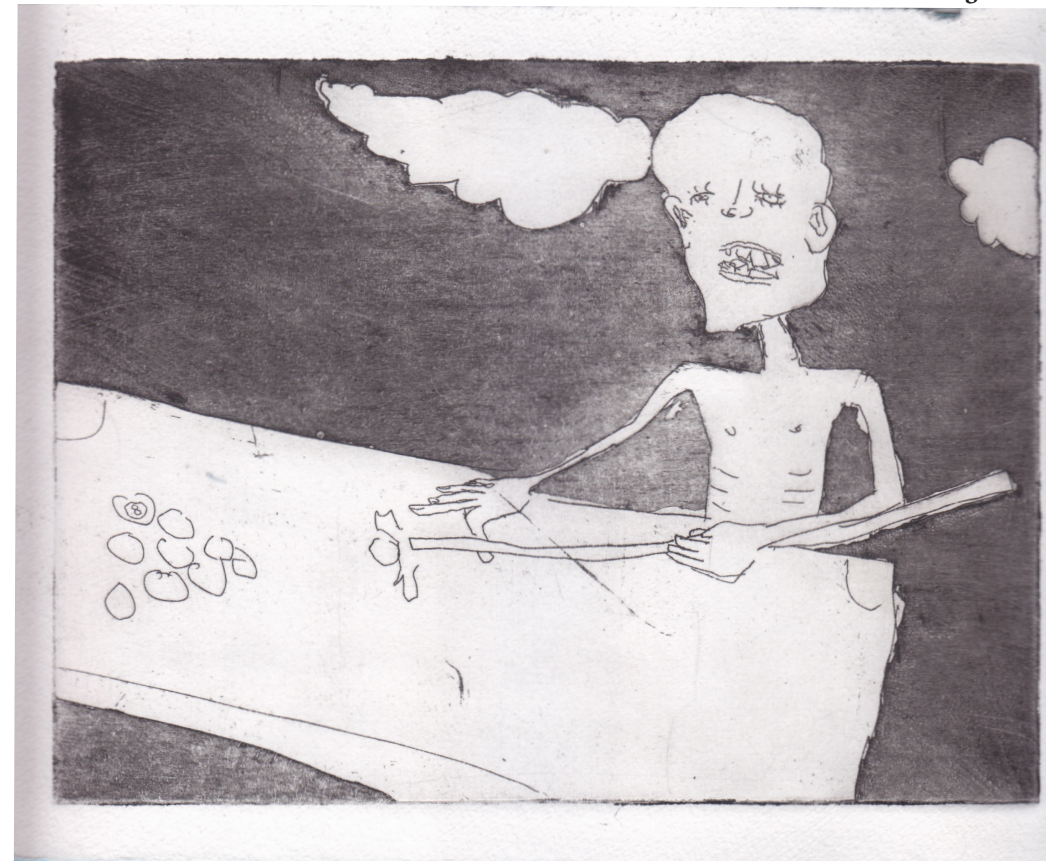
The ability – or inability – of spoken language to convey and prescribe meaning, which Holzer begins to hint at with her subversive, subliminal *Truisms*, is a common theme in the spoken word style tracks. “Door Stop” by the writer Amy Taubin features overlaid recordings of the same female voice, speaking over herself, the first of which repeats the phrase “this is the story so far,” attempting to tell a story that cannot be followed because the other recording interrupts, saying “no more story so far” and “better not.” Although Taubin attempts to impart a narrative, what is actually communicated is a certain inability which is inherent to oral storytelling. Lynne Tillman’s track with David Hofstra, entitled “Tell The Story” presents another distrustful view of the spoken word. In their track, Tillman says, “Tell the story... it put a gun to her head. She told the story. It blew her brains out,” backed by an increasingly intense musical track. In this brief recording, through Tillman’s use of the pronoun “it,” storytelling itself is

personified and characterized as violent, an act that results in the main character’s death. “The Smith-Leroy Comedy Team” by Michael Smith and A. Leroy, is the introduction to a comedy act in which Smith misinterprets Leroy’s words, responding to an innocent question by saying “Did you call me an asshole? Why did you call me an asshole? You called me an asshole! You’re the asshole,” a fittingly aggressive miscommunication for *Just Another Asshole*.

These sonic styles, despite their prominence on the album, are not the only ones present, and in many cases, these styles are

used jointly rather than exclusively by the contributing artists. The range of styles used by the artists and presented by Barbara Ess and Glenn Branca on the fifth issue of *Just Another Asshole* serve to make it the best recorded document of the community from which movements like *No Wave* sprung – including its musical, poetic, literary, and artistic impulses – as well as a critique of earlier attempts at representing the community, and a critique of mass media uses of recorded sound. •

Ian Vangineau



All My Friends at Once

Gerard Malanga / Moments in Time :: Pictures 1965 - 2023

By Ethan McKaig

On an evening in mid-October, in the living room of an old Greek Revivalist house in Catskill that overlooks the Hudson, I sat a few feet away from Gerard Malanga while he read a collection of his poetry. Malanga -- poet, photographer, filmmaker, artist, dancer, cat lover -- is 80 years old, and wore a large tan suit, a tie with a fluorescent parrot on it, and a fedora. For most of the show, his eyes were shrouded behind thick prescription glasses, but whenever he looked up from his paper I got a good look at them; they were unmistakable from the piercing eyes of the young Gerard Malanga, the superstar in Andy Warhol's factory. They say he was Warhol's right-hand man -- he once directed interviewers to ask Malanga questions about his art, for it was Malanga who actually made many of Warhol's

famous screen prints. Malanga also filmed all of Warhol's screen tests, the four minute-long films in which superstars and artists who hung around the Factory sit still, expressionless. When the Velvet Underground first went on tour, Malanga was one of two Go-Go dancers on stage, moving to the noise.

On October 15th, more than 50 people packed into the living room of Beattie-Powers Place in Catskill for the opening ceremony of Moments in Time :: Pictures 1965-2023, an exhibition of Malanga's photography. For the opening, Malanga read selections of his poetry in the living room of the house, while the show was installed one room over; some of the overflowing audience listened from the photo room. The show, which is on view every Saturday until December 10th at Beattie-Powers



Gerard Malanga (left) with Andy Warhol (right), photograph by Stephen Shore

Place in Catskill, is a collection of portraits by Malanga. It features prints of Bob Dylan, Patti Smith, Sybel Shepard, Warhol, Duke Ellington, Charles Bukowski, and Thurston Moore.

Malanga's poetic wheelhouse is in writing odes to friends who have passed away. Most of the poems were commemorative, all titled after the subject's name, occupation,

year of birth, and year of death. At the opening of Moments in Time, he read a remembrance of Patti Smith's cat, Cairo, written from the perspective of Malanga's cat, Odie (who has since, sadly, also passed). Other poetic interests included loss, nostalgia, and family. He also read a poem that I've since been scouring the Internet for — it might not yet be published, as Malanga was reading mainly from printed word docs — which discusses the nature of distilling time into poetry. It's about a time meeting with a friend in Central Park for what would be the last time they see each other. Malanga describes the meeting with an eerie knowledge that these are their last moments together, and it is unclear whether he feels this way in the moment or if he realizes it in retrospect. Malanga tends to write in this way, representing his memory as a complex weaving of multiple time periods rather than a distillation of one discrete moment. There is a line in this poem that mentions "living in the poems we never wrote, and suffering in the ones we did." It implies that the times that are not written down, and thus the experiences we subject to the possibility of forgetting,



Patti Smith on the platform of the 68th/Lexington Ave subway station, 1971 (photo by Gerard Malanga)

are free from the natural pains that come with remembering the past — nostalgia, regret, longing, etc. Time that is documented is destined to be mourned in some way once it is recounted later on. Malanga's sense of pure life is perhaps embodied in the times we forget, as the experiences are left as experiences in the moment, free from the pains of mourning time's passing.

Malanga's poems are impressions of his friends rather

than obituaries aiming to convey a coherent narrative of life. He documents their existence and impact through anecdotes and observations, rather than notable achievements and next of kin. Like all memories of our loved ones, they have been complicated in time's passing. While he didn't read it at the show, a poem I found on Malanga's website title "Robert Bly, poet, 1926-2021":

Dear Robert,
I don't suppose you can hear me
in this blizzard of a dream
dating 60-years going back
& there you were in an acrylic suit & tie
at Oscar Williams' soirée
w/ Jim Wright at your side...
& then I wake
& the bedside clock lights up 5:53.
A bit too early for me
to get up & go tinkle but I do,
or even feed Zazie's hungry eyes, fill her
water bowl...

Malanga's poetry, in its struggle to find and communicate a friend's essence, evokes questions of commemoration. How do you convey a person to someone who has never experienced them? How do you pass on their memory? While the past is muddled by memory, sometimes it is through exposition where its images come through the most

clear. Like Malanga's poetry, often the most convincing portrait of a person is one that is subjective, one in which the reader assumes the role of rememberer. After all, our own memories of loved ones involve as much about us as they do about them.

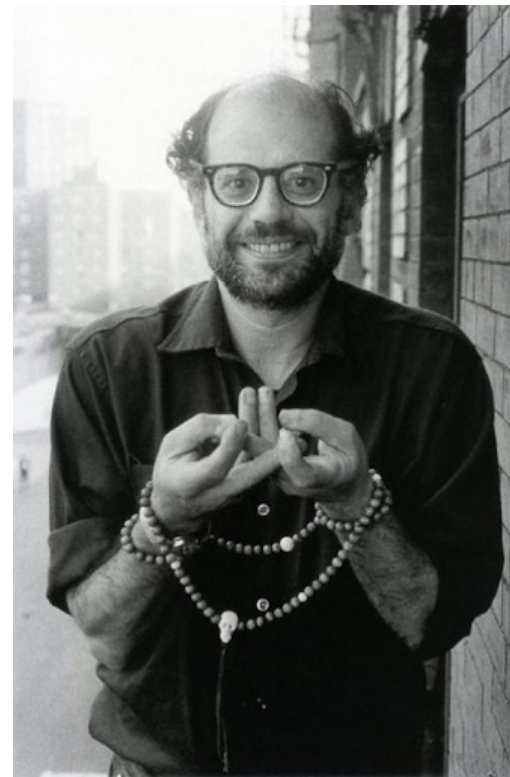
The doorway that separated the room of poetry and the room of photography might have initially seemed like a membrane through which the formats could not intermingle. But while it created an appreciated physical separation between the mediums, Malanga's poetry still concerned itself with the form of photography. There was a beautiful poem in which Malanga describes a Polaroid of himself at 7-years-old, in which he's looking up at his father on their apartment's rooftop in New York City. (The photo, we can gather, was taken in 1950.) He poeticizes perspective, reflecting on how his identity is distorted by the photograph, as he is both the observer and the observed. Malanga is looking down at his father looking down at him, a dizzying dynamic that adds depth to an already emotionally rich experience. Malanga laments what it would be like if he "could only get beyond the grain," to reach beyond the bar-

rier between the present and the past, a feeling of separation that the photograph only intensifies.

As Malanga read these poems, his photographs loomed in the next room. After the reading, I shuffled my way through the crowded house into the exhibition. The illustrious cast is as impressive as they are beautiful. I was interested in how Malanga captured these crucial figures of the New York arts scene in the 60's and 70's, some of whom he had personal relationships with. How were these relationships able to open up new perspectives on their character? There's a portrait of Moondog, a blind street musician and composer who, in the 50's and 60's, would dress up as a viking and play primitive Nordic compositions on Fifth Avenue; Patti Smith, waiting on the platform of the 68th Street/Lexington subway station in 1971; Allen Ginsberg, in 1971, smiling warmly at the camera as he performs a mudra on his fire escape, an arrangement of beads connecting his wrists. Malanga managed to produce images of these artists that capture the spirit of their artistry, with only their presence to define them. (Interestingly, an exception to this question of artists-sans-art

is a young Stephen Shore -- a contemporary Factory photographer of Malanga's, and the founder of Bard's photography department -- who is featured in the show posing in front of one of his early prints.) I was reminded of Linda McCartney's photography and how great artists might be the hardest subjects to capture. If the artist uses their work to convey their singularity, how do you document them without their art, without their way of distinguishing themselves? What is novel and interesting in McCartney's photos of The Beatles (a genre that has been explored, you could say, exhaustively) is their feeling of intimacy. Rarely do we get to see an artists as idolized as Paul McCartney or John Lennon so comfortable or vulnerable in a space. I find that Malanga's portraits hold a similar sense of intimacy, in which his relationship with the subject dictates how deeply they are revealed. In this way, his photography and poetry relate to each other, as he shows you his experience with his friends rather than trying to create an objective story of who they were.

While Malanga captures his friends in the way he experiences them, his photography



Allen Ginsberg performing a mudra on his fire escape on East 14th St, 1971 (photo by Gerard Malanga)

conveys a friendship that never dies. That is to say, his photos capture his subjects in a moment of time (hence the title of the show) that will never change; this version of this friend lives forever, its memory never to be complicated. Perhaps what is demonstrated in *Moments in Time* is this contrasting relationship between photography and poetry as a means of remembering the people around us. When Malanga photographs his friends, he is trying to capture who they are

the present moment of the photo; he is trying to immortalize the present. In contrast, when Malanga eulogizes them in his poetry, he depends on his memory's ability to recreate an image of the past in order to capture their existence (or at least how it appears to him now). The poems help us remember the past as the past, whereas the photos help us remember the past as the present.

If I learned anything from the show, it's that both forms are necessary. Both forms of remembering contribute their own needed depth to our encapsulation of the people in our lives. It feels a bit silly to try and figure this out at such a young age, to try and analyze what it means to remember friends who are no longer here. I shouldn't be worried about how I'll remember my friends, because they're still here. If anything, these ideas might help me diversify the documentation of my own life, so as to help pass it on when it's necessary, further down the line. But my youth is most likely only a hamper to this attempt to find what best distills a life; after all, Gerard Malanga is still trying to do it at 80. It'll take a lifetime to figure it out. ●

Body Meat:

on the record

Conducted by Liam Dwyer on 11/3/23

WXBC caught up with Body Meat, the stage name of experimental pop artist Chris Taylor, after his SMOG headline performance this past weekend. It was a vibrant, raucous show, where Taylor switched on a dime from avant-garde noise to vocals drenched in autotune then back again. At times he seemed so fueled by his performance that it had to explode out of him, as he jumped across the stage or looked up to the heavens while bringing a track to its climax. We talked about musicians with unique lighting, having samples on deck, and streaming algorithms.

WXBC: *I'm here with Body Meat. I really enjoyed the set. Is this your first time here at Bard?*

CHRIS: I played here a few years ago, I played drums in a friend's band called Data Band. They're great.

WXBC: *Are you from around the area?*

CHRIS: No, I'm from the Delaware/Pennsylvania/Maryland area. I lived in Philadelphia for a long time, and recently moved to Beacon, New York. Trying it out.

WXBC: *So I think that there were two really noticeable aspects of the performance. And the first one that I wanted to ask you about was the distorted guitar with a cymbal in it. I absolutely love that. I love noise experimentation like that. I'm wondering one, like, kind of how that idea developed, and if there were any musicians who inspired it?*

CHRIS: Definitely. So a couple of friends of mine in Philly, Eve and Cassra, do a similar type of guitar thing with their set as Kassie Krut. They have a friend named Paco, who would do it with it like real thick wire or something—it would make this big resonance. When I've tried it like that, it makes more of a bell sound. I wanted more of a



Liam Dwyer

raking, harsh sound so I put the cymbal in it. Today was the first day I tried it out. I think I'm gonna do it, like I really like it.

WXBC: *The second thing I noticed was the headlamps on your arms. I love when musicians have some sort of lighting element in the show that's kind of unconventional. I was wondering if that's also a recent addition, or something you've done in the past?*

CHRIS: So I've been doing that for like, maybe a year and a half. And I just started doing it because I was doing

this set, and I was like, I need something that adds to the environment. Like, I have some friends that do like lights where it's pitch black and they have like big strobes and my friend Jasper did this thing where they would have like, a, like a motion sensor light on the mic stand. So anytime they went to the mic stand, it turned on. And I was like, wow, that is really cool, but I can't afford to have a big rig with me. So I went to the hardware store, and I saw these headlamps. I wondered what that would look like, and I tried

it. It's really nice because I can hide (laughter). I can shine the light on the crowd. Sometimes it makes people uncomfortable for a second, but then they like, kind of get into the bit of the whole lights.

WXBC: *Would you say it leans more into form or function?*

CHRIS: It's a little bit of both. And it helps me to get into a good headspace with the set. I'm like yeah, I'm totally blinding the people in the front (laughter).

WXBC: *I could see you just fine! I kept trying to get a good photo of it, especially when you were hitting the guitar. It was so striking visually, I loved it.*

CHRIS: Yeah, and that's mostly it because I'm drumming and doing things with my arms. I was like, well, it would be cool to have something that like, like a light that moves with me.

There's actually another reason: when I played a show in Berlin, the light tech was like, "yo, I can definitely keep time to your songs." I was like, you don't have to, like don't do it.

WXBC: *You do a lot of time switches.*

CHRIS: Yeah, the tech tried it and it was eh-h-h-h. The arms save that—everything's in time all the time because it's just me.

WXBC: *I know you collabed*

with Injury Reserve [now Bye Storm] and I loved the lights that they did [for recent tours]. Those were more like a natural bulb or something right? Because it had such a warm glow.

CHRIS: I don't know what it actually was, but Parker's whole rig for that set is so amazing. He's able to control it with his gear. It was totally the same problem to solve, thinking: "Oh, this album is not really in an exact structure."

WXBC: *It's very organic!*

CHRIS: He's got it tied in with the music on his end with knobs and stuff. There's probably more to it (laughter). Parker let me use his rig one time and it was one knob but it didn't do everything that he did live.

WXBC: *I don't know if you like Phil Elverum or The Microphones, but he has this tour documentary where he hangs like a big paper lamp off his guitar while he's playing, and that's the only source of light in the room. It's incredible.*

CHRIS: I think making the room dark, especially for this type of music, gets people out of their headspace. It's gonna stop and it's gonna start, and there's awkward pauses in the songs and things like that. I'm definitely trying to cater to the vibe of a show while keeping it

my own.

WXBC: *Would you say you have a most important piece of gear?*

CHRIS: The \$100 MIDI keyboard is easily the most critical, which is funny, because I've had to replace it so many times. It just breaks. At this point, I need to get sponsored by them. I really wanted to make this set on CDJs, but I don't have them. This is a way for me to set up a keyboard and the sampler into almost a DJ set style to where I can have samples and all these crazy things in the background that I can fire at any time. All of my favorite DJs do that, like DJ Travella has samples on deck. It really adds if you're able to just fire stuff when you're feeling it like that.

WXBC: *So there are some samples that you reserved for certain emotional points?*

CHRIS: There's certain ones on this set. I didn't play this one keyboard that I normally do, because it's really intense, and it was so loud.

WXBC: *Yeah, they ran out of earplugs.*

CHRIS: I don't know if anyone saw this, but I was actually turning down the volume at the end. I was worried how loud it was. I'm glad everyone's okay.

WXBC: *I guess as a final ques-*

tion, WXBC is Bard's radio so we like to hear about how artists relate to the radio. Do you have any radio station shout outs from back home, any sentimental stations, or memories that stick out?

CHRIS: I don't know (laughter).

WXBC: *It's all good. I mean, I feel like we live in an era where like radio is something that's acceptable to kind of not have in your life, because you can stream whatever you want.*

CHRIS: I mean, I love the college radio. Like I love y'all playing the freaky shit and playing stuff that people wouldn't normally hear. I think it's super important, especially now, because attention spans are so short. I think it's swinging back though. I think people want long music and I think people want to have a station that shows them stuff. Because that's all like all the streaming people are trying to do.

WXBC: *Like the Spotify AI DJ? [Fuck you AI DJ. Come at me.]*

CHRIS: It's not ever gonna be as good because you have somebody like you or like, you know, people that run the radio curating a list of songs that they feel should be heard. I don't think it'll ever stop.

WXBC: *I believe in it too. Thank you so much! •*

a reflection on the child

By Julia Seaver

the first language is the one of love the one where my body leans into yours
love language, languish

toi et moi. your rough hair, the gentle nook of my neck.
my heart is a child, she doesn't understand endings
a small soft bird cradled by the lower branches which
wails.

i grasp at you the way mon petit chou grasps at grandma's ruby ringed fingers
where did you go? covered by grasping hands, warm and empty
object permanence is hard, when it comes to love and
then it's lost, the object being

your jokes about old jewish men, and the language being pirahã
isolated in the heart of south america in the black pearl in my mouth in the
ruby of
my grandmother's hand

Gabriel Chermak



Falling Flat:

Poor Singing and Subversive Masculinity

By Gabe Goering

My singing has always been a point of contention in my family. Once, when I was eight or nine, my dad pulled me into the guest room and asked me to sing "Happy Birthday." I knew the words, and I could hear the melody, or what I thought was the melody, in my head, but whatever I performed for him was not "Happy Birthday." My dad tried to coach me, to help me raise my flats and drop my sharps, one note at a time, but soon it was obvious that the theory he'd been testing was right: I did not, and do not have an ear for pitch, or the ability to control my singing voice.

My musical inability sets me apart from my family. My dad played jazz bass for years. My mom sang in choir and studied music theory in college. My brother, who has had perfect pitch for as long as I can remember, is now an EDM computer wizard. I did not inherit their technical ability, but their interest in making noise clearly rubbed off on me. As a kid, I would sing off-pitch, partly because it was the only way I could sing, and partly because I enjoyed watching my brother cringe as each of the sounds

I produced blatantly clashed with the perfect notes in his head. Being annoying, as it is for most children, was a way for me to do what I had no other safe way to do: to sing. If sounding good was not an option, then I would use my voice for discomfort. I was still singing.

As an adult, I find instinctive joy in the voices of men who cannot stay on key. Most punk, plenty of rock, and some strands of folk don't feature what we might call "conventional" singing. Bob Dylan, Mick Jagger, David Byrne, and the sing-talking frontmen of new-wave groups like DEVO and B-52s were all probably accused of not being able to sing. I like all these voices, but the question of "singing well" is often moot. Some (Byrne) could probably sing just fine, while others (DEVO) might just have been slowed down by normal singing. What I find most compelling here is not the singers who avoid, abandon, or toy with traditional singing, but those who reach for it sincerely and wholeheartedly only to fall flat.

It shouldn't be surprising, then, that Bladee connected with me in my early years of college. There has been a protecting irony in Bladee's fandom, a sense that caring

about things like melody would be uncool. But Bladee himself, pushing 30, inevitably got more sincere, and on 333, he started to sing, his voice as brittle as sugar over guitars and shiny synths on tracks like “Wings in Motion” and “Swan Lake.” Then there’s “Mean Girls,” a 2000s club anthem with the blood sucked out. Being “in the back of the club” has never sounded more awkward, but it also sounds ecstatic and a little androgynous. Examples of Bladee singing his heart out have piled up over the past years. Insufficiently helped by autotune, he reaches high up in his tiny register for notes that just aren’t there. Instead of being pathetic, the result is euphoric - whatever can move this guy to sing like that must be real.

A little later, I got the same feeling from A.G. Cook, better known for his work with Charli XCX and on PC Music. To me, A.G.’s song “Silver” is a near-perfect example of this “dorky-to-transcendent” kind of singing. Some of it might be personal bias; lines like “natural one playing D&D/I don’t know we met at the library” seem designed for lovestruck nerds to sing along to. But hearing A.G. sing his heart out over too-loud laser sounds is a rush, and when he fails to hit the right notes, the song’s thesis is supported; when falling in love, what’s for him, an awkward 30-year-old making music on his computer to do, other than to sing?

Once I’d identified my interest in men singing poorly with positive results, I started to see it ev-

erywhere. Jonathan Richman’s performance at Bard this October, in which he sang in a wavering, off-balance voice about love and human connection, felt like an even more raw and sincere version of the same, no auto-tune required. Thundercat is able to turn his pitchy falsetto into something either genuinely charming or at least heartfelt. More popularly, Tyler, the Creator’s singing on Igor, often pitch-shifted and always off-key, made what would have already been great-sounding songs into personal, emotional moments (giving the “Earquake” hook to Justin Bieber, as was Tyler’s stated intention, would have been a mistake).

For those who aren’t men, the avenue of conventionally questionable singing is even more closed off. Any old article or YouTube comment about Britney Spears should tell you how the world of pop feels about women using auto-tune, trying strange inflections, or missing notes in live shows or pre-processed vocals. In the underground, negative reactions to the voices of artists like Laura Les and Black Dresses seem loaded with transphobia, and earlier, reactions to Yoko Ono and Liz Phair were clearly misogynistic before they were concerned about “tonality.” There is a larger conversation to be had about the hegemony of tonality, and the way it works to enforce patriarchy. At their worst, the kind of songs I’ve described are yet more examples of men doing next to nothing and getting inordinate praise for it.



Nathan Miller

At their best, though, these songs feel like productive or even subversive performances of masculinity. Men’s singing is typically expected to be either aggressive (possibly sexually aggressive) or highly skilled. These things - emotional or sexual aggression, and absolute control or proficiency - are tropes of masculinity. Their exclusive perpetuation in art can contribute to harmful, essentialist ideas of what “being a man” must look like. If, for instance, all breakup songs by men sounded like they were sung either by Jon Bon Jovi or by Frank Sinatra, this would strengthen the

cultural concept that men only have two options when confronted with rejection - scorned spewing or high drama. Neither of these modes do much in the way of expressing or processing genuine emotion, and both can have a misogynistic bent. To be clear, yelling and screaming, showing off, or just talking are all options open to anyone on songs - they’re not inherently bad or even mutually exclusive. But they are limiting, and to attempt other avenues of emotional expression is both cathartic and necessary.

The reason I love the artists I’ve mentioned is that they seem to



Robert Dupree

offer another option. By not disguising their traditionally poor singing voices, and by singing fully and sincerely, these artists defy expectations of how they perform their gender in song. What they suggest instead is that emotion is enough. They are moved to sing by love, joy, or heartache, and so they do. Instead of following the masculine template and finding something else to do with their feelings - push them out violently, deliver them with absolute control, or keep them bottled up - they express them freely and earnestly. In doing this, they “fail” in their performance of their masculinity, and succeed in being honest and human. Their lack of singing ability may make their music less palatable, but what they lose in tunefulness, they often gain back in charisma. More importantly, truthful self-expression is essential for all artists - it’s a huge part of what gives meaning to their work, what allows

others to connect with it.

The boy I was, running around my house and singing off key, as much to express myself as to annoy my family, needed more artists like this. Their influence might have somehow eased the pressure I felt to be legible in my expression of my gender, to be in any given arena either strong, or smart, or skilled, or cruel, or, most commonly, silent. They might have shown me another option, a way to get through the no-win game of gender that didn’t involve turning inward and building resentment. While it can be a relief to opt out of the fraught areas of self-expression and art-making, I think it is often healthier to opt in, and to break the rules. To sing in spite of, to get emotion out into the world however you can, is a risk, and worth listening to. ●

Works of Fiction

The End of the Harvest

By David Nicholls

It’s hard to tell what kids are saying. The kid was asking the adult for something, and the adult had no idea what. The adult was cold because he was wearing a blue Ralph Lauren corduroy jacket, a red Woolrich vintage flannel shirt, and some okay jeans that he’d had for a long time—he couldn’t remember where he bought them or what the brand was—that nonetheless still fit him and still looked dark enough to go with the jacket. That wasn’t enough clothing for how cold it was, but his kind of thing happens all the time after summer finally lets go and there’s that abrupt snap into fall—serious, cold, fall with a capital f, but not like winter or anything.

The kid asked for whatever she was asking for again.

“I don’t know what you want dude.” The wind blew and picked up a few of the leaves left on the lawn—most people in the neighborhood had raked for the last time this year—and one leaf landed on top of the recycling bin in the driveway where the two stood.

The adult didn’t realize it, but he was still holding his cigarette butt. He was too busy looking at the single remaining apple that was dangling rotten from the huge apple tree on the front lawn. The tree had a trunk as wide as a house’s front door and had been there for gener-

ations. The adult wasn’t even sure if the apple was real, because it was that point in the evening when the sun had already set and it didn’t make sense that it was still a little light out.

The kid asked again and this time it made sense:

“Can I have one of the apples?” The kid had obviously seen one or other of the neighbors walking away with a bag of apples.

“They’re kind of old.”

The kid asked “please” again in that long, stretched-out kid voice.

“I gotchu.”

The adult went back inside. The table was set, so the wide centerpiece fruit bowl that was actually supposed to be a salad bowl was on the kitchen counter. He looked in. There was one apple left and some random other small debris like a leaf from another apple and a small key for the kind of lock they have at storage units. The lock that went with this key was in the bowl in the mudroom that the adult puts his keys in when he comes home. He picked up the apple. It was a little mushy.

“We’re probably going to eat soon,” Jake said from the kitchen. The adult turned and looked at Jake.

“Is there any root beer left?” the adult said.

"No, but I think I saw a Pepsi in the freezer." The adult went back outside with the apple.

Closing the door, he realized that the kid was gone and that his cigarette butt was still in his hand. He walked over to where there was grass shooting up through a crack in the pavement next to the recycling bin, opened the bin up, and tossed his cigarette in. In opening the bin the adult had flung into the yard the leaf that had minutes earlier landed atop the recycling bin.

The street lights turned on and bathed their reigns in a warm golden light. The warmth of the light was beautiful and the blue-grey confusing darkness of the late fall world was beautiful. But togeth-

er they became even more beautiful. Was it because the light was invented, after the darkness, to add warmth to the world? Or was it because the darkness reminded of nature in the face of unnatural light? It was probably neither.

The adult went back inside to everyone around the table. They had to pull up an extra chair for Henry, and they all ate an interesting soup, roast beef, overcooked broccoli, and the best roasted potatoes that most of them had ever had in their lives. It was that recipe where you boil the potatoes with baking soda and then cook them in the oven so they get crispy and fluffy. Everyone was still hungry after dinner because Jake didn't check the serving size on any of the recipes he used. •

Louise Albert



Personal History

Michael at Wendy's: A Narrative Verse

By Calvin Pineda

I'd been working at the Wendy's three weeks / before I worked up the courage to ask Mike if he believed in ghosts.

(A pretty uneventful three weeks / except for the strange man who always came through the drive through on thursdays and ordered three plain baked potatoes, no explanation)

(And also the time Mike caught me sneaking a Spicy Nugget when I thought no one was looking.) / We were not friends.

But y'know I had to ask him / because I'd already asked everyone else,

And I wasn't gonna be at the Wendy's much longer / But I was afraid.

And then it was my last Tuesday, and no one else was up front / So I took a deep breath and

Said "Mike, do you believe in ghosts?" / and without looking up from the Loaded Nacho Burger he was dutifully preparing he said

"Yes" / and I said "Tell me more."

So when Michael's family passed thru Ellis Island / by way of the Isle of Man

Circa eighteensixty, give or take / they brought with them only: their family, their scandinavian features, and

An ornate wooden trunk / wrapped up in strange and twisted carvings,

And he said no one gave it much thought, / after all, it was just one of those old family things, yknow, like

How Uncle Ernest takes shots and then gets handsy, or / how names change when pressured by the peeping eyes of govt. etc.

And also, there's a trunk that moves around from time to time / from aunt to uncle to in law to brother to brother and so on;

Until oneday Mike moves out from South Dakota / and crosses into Idaho, for work

And brings with him the ornate wooden trunk / “and how I got it” he said, “I don’t know,”

But he seemed quite unfazed as he told me / that when he put the trunk up in his attic

He started hearing footsteps in the night. / “Quiet ones,” he said, “But they got louder

A few nights in a row, and it got old, / so I just went and moved it to the shed.”

“Are there footsteps in the shed?” I asked. / He shook his head. “But then again, I’m never really out there anymore.” / He flipped the bun and stuck it, so precise

Atop the vibrant orange of the sauce / and now, two days before I leave the Wendy’s

I want to shake this man until his ghosts / pop out of him like mimsy plastic coins.

I quit on Thursday-- had to. Came to school / But now, at night, I think

About how Mike said he was roughly six years old / when he heard strangers’ voices call his name

In his grandma’s house; all day, each day-- / and how, at night, he’d sit outside and point into

The swirling vacuum South Dakota sky, observing / all the lights: too fast for planes, or drones,

And when he’d go inside, he’d ask his Grandma / what was going on up there. She’d say

“I don’t know, dear.” And he would lie awake, / imagining what floats there, distant, high.

Sometimes, when I’m sad, I drive to Kingston / and pass the Wendy’s. Sometimes, I go in,

And order the seasonal frosty, and eye the guy / who hands it to me, and wonder:

What strange lights in the sky have you seen, sir? / I’m haunted, now, by everyone I meet.

So it goes, I guess: at Wendy’s or elsewhere, / you ask for ghosts, you get what you’ve got coming. ●

What’s Happening at BUMP?

(until the end of the semester)

@ Root Cellar

Whirlybird and Wiring: Saturday, December 2nd

@ SMOG

Los Pocos Locos: Friday, November 17th

Toro (400) and Birdhouse: Friday December 8th

WXBC Birthday Party w/ student djs and Bring Your Own Vinyl: Saturday, December 9th

Unsolicited Recommendations

With Mikee the Baker (of Tivoli Bread and Baking), Ray Camp (expert on restaurants near Bard), and your editors, Maggie and David

Mikee the Baker *recommends*: the Arancini from Giobatta



A man of routine, (he wakes up every morning at 1am and Monday nights always mean dinner with his friend Emily), Mikee describes how, when he eats the arancini from Giobatta's in Tivoli, "time stands still". While food didn't necessarily bring him to the Tivoli area, it certainly made him stay. He learned to bake while working in a cafe, during which he still cashed in unemployment checks. But, he knew he could bake. He decided to open his own bakery in 2003, thinking that he would do it until it failed. And he's been waiting for it to fail for 20 years. He and Kathleen Robertson (a student baker) both agree that their current favorite at Tivoli Bread and Baking is the sausage rolls.

Maggie *recommends*: Quitting your Job

As a current member of the workforce straining against the yoke of borderline labor abuses, Maggie is telling you to quit your job. Most of them suck. If you are part of the 1% who both love their job and are getting paid enough, don't take her advice. But for the 99%, quit and get a new one. Maybe then you'll be in that 1%, the shining light at the end of the tunnel.



David *recommends*: Hulu with Ads



Hulu is the best. First of all, it's free with student Spotify. Second of all, it has the perfect blend of pretentious and unpretentious media. It's got The Worst Person in the World. It's got The Golden Bachelor. It's got Saw. It's got Normal People. It's got Modern Family. It's got Crimes of the Future and The Banshees of Inisherin. It's got Family Guy and Over the Garden Wall. You could sit and watch Hulu alternating between deep-thinking kino and background sitcom FOREVER, filling yourself with philosophical questions and then refreshing with content until you decompose back into the Earth. It's crucial that you get Hulu with ads specifically because ads give us pauses to digest the things we watch and give us good stopping points that keep us from binge watching.

Ray's Restaurant Picks

Places for your parents to take you

In their 4 years at Bard, WXBC Program Director Ray Camp has gained ample insight into the local food scene. They have given us some of their favorite spots around Bard.

* Accessible via the Bard shuttle

Cafes/Delis/Bakeries:

Morningbird in Kinderhook

WYLDE in Hudson

Village Coffee & Goods in Kingston

Otto's Market in Germantown

The Little Rye Bakehouse in Kingston

The Corner Counter in Red Hook *

Pizza:

Ollie's Slice Shop in Kingston

Baba Louie's in Hudson

Fast Food:

Buns Burgers in Rhinebeck AND Kingston

Pan Latin Plates:

Lil' Deb's Oasis in Hudson

Filipino Food:

Harana Market in Woodstock

Ice Cream:

Fortunes in Tivoli *

Del's Roadside in Rhinebeck

Sit-down Dinners:

Gaskins in Germantown

feast & floret in Hudson